

COMPLEMENTARY CITY INITIATIVES

A fundamental goal of the Livable South Downtown Planning Study is to strengthen the health and vitality of south downtown neighborhoods while retaining their unique characteristics. While the project’s prime focus is land use in this part of the Downtown Urban Center, complementary strategies to address other community issues will be necessary to succeed in meeting this goal.

During the past two years, the Department of Planning and Development has coordinated with other departments to address priority issues for the community that are not addressed elsewhere in this report. These include initiatives relating to economic development, small business, transportation, public safety, public realm improvements, arts and culture, households with children and human services. The following is a description of other efforts that have been undertaken in order to more fully address the issues that will contribute to the success of meeting the goal of a vital, livable South Downtown.



ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Livable South Downtown planning study contributes to the goal of neighborhood vitality primarily through the influence of land use and zoning policies. We know that South Downtown is not homogenous, but a collection of unique neighborhoods and districts. Consequently, there is not a “one size fits all strategy” for strengthening local economies. The City is pursuing complementary strategies in each neighborhood as well as some programmatic improvements that will benefit all of South Downtown.

Pioneer Square

Pioneer Square is the nation’s first national historic district. Its proximity to financial, retail and government centers downtown and to the King Street/Union Station Multimodal hub make it a likely area for investment. For many years, however, the neighborhood has been economically challenged. Periodic incidents associated with nightlife and the presence of numerous human service uses such as missions, shelters and other services contribute to a perception by many that the neighborhood is not clean or safe. The Pioneer Square Neighborhood Plan, completed in 1998, called for “catalyzing” middle income and market rate housing production and suggested several priority sites for this development. It suggested that new housing would bring a new sense of community ownership and investment, support to businesses and more “eyes on the street” to address the public’s perception of safety. Soon after the plan was completed however, Pioneer Square businesses suffered disproportionately from the “tech bust” in 2000. The subsequent loss of other businesses with a long association with the neighborhood exacerbated this impact.

The Livable South Downtown Planning Study has recommended zoning changes to stimulate housing and job development. Council's passage of legislation increasing development potential on the Qwest Field North Parking Lot is intended to bring hundreds of new jobs and residents and provide a significant economic boost to the Pioneer Square neighborhood.

The decision to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct with a deep bore tunnel allows for a dramatic redevelopment of the Central Waterfront, which should help strengthen all of South Downtown and be a particular boon to Pioneer Square. It should be noted that Central Waterfront redevelopment will also have impacts on Pioneer Square residents and businesses as parking is lost and traffic and utilities are rerouted. The City and State are working together to mitigate these impacts.

Chinatown/International District and Little Saigon

The Chinatown/International District and Little Saigon neighborhoods are the center of Seattle's Asian-American community. Chinatown/ID emerged as early Asian-immigrants established needed hotels, restaurants and services, as well as a refuge from prevalent anti-Asian laws and sentiment. Little Saigon emerged from the more recent wave of immigrants from Southeast Asia who created a vibrant business district out of a disinvested area. As a result, the neighborhood is rooted in a strong cultural identity with a majority of Asian-owned and operated small businesses.

The Chinatown/International District and Little Saigon neighborhoods are concerned about displacement of ethnic businesses and immigrant residents as the neighborhood redevelops and Livable South Downtown Planning Study recommendations are implemented. This concern is heightened by the fragile state of many of the neighborhoods' businesses, their unique cultural needs and population shifts in the Asian-American community. To strengthen these business districts, the City is taking a comprehensive approach to identify and address core business needs, including economic support for small businesses.

SMALL BUSINESS ATTRACTION & SUPPORT

Economic Impact Study

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) commissioned a study of the potential economic impacts of additional development capacity and proposed large-scale developments to the small businesses in Chinatown/ID and Little Saigon. Members of the community helped define the scope and methodology of the study. While the economic impacts vary, the neighborhood's small businesses are generally not prepared to adapt to the changing environment. The study recommended a number of culturally-appropriate strategies to support the neighborhoods' small businesses.

Chinatown/ID & Little Saigon Business District Retail Analysis

The Office of Economic Development (OED) sponsored an analysis of the retail trends and community shopping patterns in Chinatown/ID and Little Saigon to develop a spe-



cific set of retail support strategies. The study helped shape a technical assistance program to support small businesses in areas such as merchandising, marketing and promotions.

Chinatown/ID & Little Saigon Business District Action Agenda

The Office of Economic Development (OED) worked with the community in developing a City/Community action agenda to implement recommendations from the Economic Impact Study, the Retail Analysis, the community's Vision 2030 report and the neighborhood plan. OED will continue to work with the community on implementing business attraction and retention strategies, as well as developing strong business organizations to represent and coordinate services for small businesses and property owners.

Pioneer Square Business District Revitalization Strategy

The City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development (OED), in coordination with the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and the Seattle Police Department (SPD) is working with Pioneer Square businesses and community groups to complete a Pioneer Square Business District Revitalization Strategy. This strategy, to be completed by early 2010, will result in a targeted set of recommended interventions to improve Pioneer Square's business health and competitiveness.

Small Business Organizing

Strong neighborhood business organizations are vital to ensuring that the needs of small business and property owners are represented and responded to. The Office of Economic Development

(OED) has been working with a number of organizations in both Chinatown/ID and Little Saigon to achieve wide participation and engagement of small businesses. OED is currently providing financial support for small business outreach, program development, and establishment of a center to facilitate/coordinate neighborhood revitalization efforts.

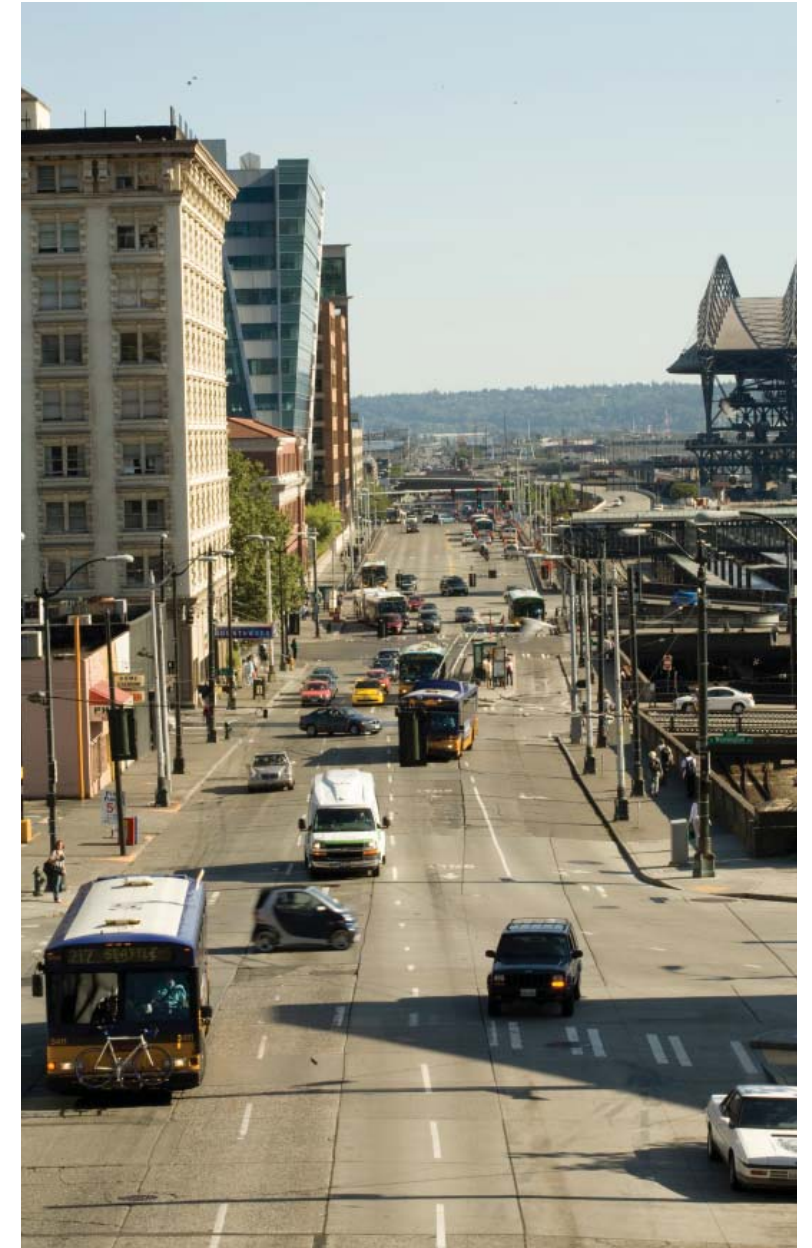
Additional Support

The Office of Economic Development (OED) has provided financial support to the Chinatown/ID Business Improvement Area (CIDBIA) for additional street cleaning, the Chinatown International District BIA for development of the Night Market, has brokered community partnerships with SCORE (www.seattlescore.org) to provide in-depth technical assistance to Vietnamese entrepreneurs, refocused the Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and Impact Capital to create new initiatives for revitalizing Chinatown/ID and Little Saigon commercial districts. OED provided \$2 million in Section 108 loan funds and federal grant funds for rehabilitation of the Bush Hotel which leveraged over \$6.5 million in additional private investment creating at least 41 new permanent jobs. OED is currently providing funding support for a community collaboration focusing on commercial revitalization on S. King Street

TRANSPORTATION

Parking Management & Community parking Program Review

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is currently working with the Pioneer Square community on park-



ing issues- primarily related to projected parking resource reductions through Alaskan Way Viaduct/Central Waterfront redevelopment. The Chinatown/International District and Little Saigon communities have requested that a parking program review for their communities be expedited. A review is currently scheduled within the next three years. The City will continue initiatives to improve short-term parking such as eliminating remaining un-metered areas.

Other Transportation Projects

- Multiple repaving and maintenance projects throughout South Downtown
- Jose Rizal Bridge rehab work planning underway
- 2nd Avenue Extension/4th Ave. South seismic retrofit planning underway
- Intelligent Transportation System Corridor implementation underway
- SR 519 project underway
- Dearborn Street urban design improvements planning underway
- Work related to Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement underway, including changes to surface street alignment in the vicinity of the tunnel south portal in South Downtown
- City planning for a streetcar network that will connect South Downtown with Capitol Hill, funded with Sound Transit 2 dollars, approved in 2008

PUBLIC SAFETY

The primary Livable South Downtown goal of encouraging new housing and employment in South Downtown neighborhoods is a strong public safety strategy. New residents and employees will significantly increase the numbers of people on the streets during the daytime and evening hours, creating an environment that is safer and that discourages illegal and uncivil behaviors, and strengthening neighborhoods' voices in civil engagement. The following projects and initiatives help promote safe, livable neighborhoods:

Collaboration between the East and West Precincts

During the Livable South Downtown planning process, stakeholders from Little Saigon asked that their neighborhood be moved from the East Precinct to the West Precinct. The Seattle Police Department (SPD) proposed, as a more effective public safety strategy, that a collaborative policing model be crafted in partnership with Chinatown/ID and Little Saigon stakeholders. The partnership model has been implemented.

Neighborhood Policing Staffing Plan, 2008 – 2012

Seattle Police Department (SPD) has completed the first significant reassessment of resource deployment in thirty years. SPD's Neighborhood Policing Project (NPP) should have positive impacts throughout the South Downtown planning area by increasing the number of officers patrolling the area, enhancing response times to calls for service, and

allowing more time for proactive work on safety problems with members of the community. The Police Department is aggressively recruiting new officers and by 2012 will have increased its patrol force by 25%, adding 120 officers over the hiring period. The NPP should allow officers more time within their assigned districts, strengthening ties between officers and the communities they serve.

Alcohol Impact Area (AIA)

On November 1, 2006, the Washington State Liquor Control Board (WSLCB) enacted regulations preventing the sale of 23 high alcohol content/low cost beer and malt products and 6 fortified wines in Center City neighborhoods, including South Downtown. This action extended a successful AIA in Pioneer Square in 2003. The City is actively engaged with community partners and the WSLCB to evaluate the effectiveness and possible expansion of the program. An evaluation of the program was completed in 2008. Additional information is available at <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/aia/>.

Nightlife Enforcement

Nightlife is part of what makes Seattle a vibrant city. Entertainment venues generate economic benefits, and related activity can enhance the nighttime streetscape. However, noise and public safety problems associated with some venues has become a problem. Over the past few years, Seattle has sought to strike a balance between the value that nightlife adds to the city and the problems it can generate.



The City established a Joint Enforcement Team (JET) to provide a framework for nightlife enforcement and regulatory assistance by a number of different departments. The goal of JET is to implement an assistance and enforcement strategy via a collaborative effort among City, County and State agencies. The JET was established to ensure proper coordination among City departments and to provide comprehensive regulatory and enforcement tools to address the complex issues surrounding nightlife in mixed use neighborhoods.

The Office of Economic Development (OED) has developed a Nightlife Technical Assistance Program and a handbook designed to 1) assist nightlife establishment owners navigate and understand government rules and regulations by clearly laying out what is expected of them, 2) providing access to the resources, tools and training opportunities to maintain compliance, and 3) describing the consequences and penalties for falling out of compliance. The business assistance office also helps coordinate technical assistance meetings with business owners and relevant City departments to address various issues related to nightlife

CLEAR ALLEYS PROGRAM

The City has eliminated dumpsters on City property (alleys, sidewalks and planting strips) in most Downtown neighborhoods, including Pioneer Square, as part of new solid waste contracts that began in April, 2009. Based on input from community members, it was decided that an outreach/education effort should be conducted in Chinatown/ID. It is anticipated that the Chinatown/International District and Little Saigon neighborhoods will be added to the mandatory program in 2010. The removal of dumpsters provides significant benefits in helping to address public safety problems. Dumpsters tend to provide cover for illegal and

uncivil activities, and spillover helps create an environment that invites negative activity. Removing dumpsters also provides the opportunity in some South Downtown alleys for new, usable pedestrian connections and retail space and residential entrance uses in the rear of buildings.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

There is growing recognition of the opportunities to improve the pedestrian experience throughout Seattle's urban core by improving the pedestrian environment. The City has launched an initiative to explore a wide range of possible improvements. South Downtown neighborhoods will be a focus of this initiative. Current proposals include:

Merchant Vending in Chinatown/ID/Little Saigon

An appealing aspect of the Chinatown/ID and Little Saigon neighborhoods is the fruit and vegetable vending that is an extension of the neighborhoods' numerous small grocery stores. DPD is working with the Seattle Department of Transportation and Department of Neighborhoods to create standards and simplify permitting processes to legally and safely allow merchant vending on street sidewalks.

Banner Program

Banners provide an opportunity to infuse the public realm with splashes of color and art. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and the Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs (OACA) is working toward a streamlined permitting process for adding banners to poles in the city.

Sidewalk Cafes

Legislation adopted in 2008 streamlined the permitting process for sidewalk café permits.

Street Food Vending

The City is analyzing the current City and Seattle/King County Health Department regulations governing the vending of food in the right-of-way to explore desirable changes to encourage the appropriate street vending activities. The sales of a wide variety of foods, flowers, coffee and other goods can add color and help activate neighborhood business districts.

Signal Box Art

The City has implemented a new program to utilize the many gray metal boxes that house the electronic equipment that control traffic signals as venues for introducing art elements to streetscapes.

Capital Improvements and Streetscape Planning

As part of proposed designation of green streets in South Downtown, DPD is currently funding the development of streetscape concept plans for Maynard Avenue South from South Jackson Street to South Dearborn Street and for South Lane Street from 5th Avenue South to I-5. It is anticipated that concept plans for additional streets will be completed over time.

Park Activation

The Parks Department will continue its successful program of adding entertainment and appropriate commercial enterprises to help activate South Downtown parks to make them inviting for all users.

Other Parks Projects

- International District/Chinatown Community Center opened in 2005
- International District Community Center expansion
- Hing Hay Park expansion acquisition completed. Renovation of existing park and development of newly acquired park land is funded and planning is underway
- Danny Woo Community Garden Improvements completed
- Occidental Park Improvements completed

Connections to Yesler Terrace

Yesler Terrace redevelopment planning provides a rare opportunity to re-connect neighborhoods. City staff is working with the Seattle Housing Authority to:

- Ensure redevelopment plans are integrated with the Chinatown/ID and Little Saigon business districts and contribute to the vitality of the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful involvement and communication with the business community regarding the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace.



ARTS AND CULTURE

The historic districts of Pioneer Square and the Chinatown/International District each have a rich tradition of arts and culture. Pioneer Square has long been known for its arts scene with artist live/work space and a rich gallery district. Rising costs have taken a toll, however, and displacement of artists has been significant. The Tashiro/Kaplan Artist Lofts project, developed by Artspace Projects, Inc. and the Pioneer Square Community Association, was completed in 2004. It provides fifty live/work units for artists and their families and a mixture of galleries, other retail and the headquarters of King County's 4 Culture.

The Chinatown/International District, since its founding, has long been home to pan-Asian immigrants and reflects the contributions of many Asian cultures. The City's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs has directed significant 1% for the arts program funding to South Downtown including numerous events at the Theatre Off Jackson, Panama Hotel, Larimore Project, Chinese Information & Service Center, Li Heng Da Dance, and various galleries and outdoor events.



FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

DPD, in partnership with other City departments, developed recommendations intended to make the Center City, including South Downtown, a place that is more inviting to families with children. The Family-Friendly Urban Neighborhoods (FUN) strategy included recommendations aimed at providing a range of amenities, services and infrastructure necessary to help families with children thrive in an urban setting.

Housing for Families with Children

In South Downtown, the Chinatown/International District in particular has expressed a desire to evolve as a neighborhood that is welcoming to families with children. Nihonmachi Terrace and Village Square II are examples of affordable family housing communities developed by community-based non-profit organizations to further this goal. The Village Square II project includes a Seattle Public Library branch and a Parks Department community center and 53 affordable two and three bedroom units. The development proposed for the "North Lot" in Pioneer Square also plans to include affordable family units.

While housing units with multiple bedrooms that are affordable to families is important, research indicates that a range of amenities is necessary to create an environment which supports families in dense, urban settings. Family housing should be located near services including schools, open space, safe streetscapes, community centers and commercial areas which contain grocery stores, cleaners and other services that families need.

NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING FUND

Since 2004, South Downtown neighborhoods have received grants totaling \$454,872 which leveraged an additional \$867,733. Sample projects include the ID/Chinatown Community Center gymnasium, the Chinatown Historic Gate, the Nihonmachi Maynard Avenue Green Street, the ID Intergenerational Leadership Program, the Japanese Heritage Project, First Avenue Median Strip Renovation, Danny Woo Garden Community Gathering Place, Pioneer Square Lighting, Chinatown/ID Night Market, International Children's Park Renovation, King Street Commercial Revitalization, and Danny Woo Children's Garden planning.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The City of Seattle contributes significant funding to help create and preserve affordable housing. The following are recent South Downtown examples:

- Domingo Viernes Affordable Family Apartments- \$1.6 million
- Nihonmachi Terrace affordable family apartments- \$1.6 million
- Tashiro/Kaplan Artist Live/Work Housing- \$1.4 million
- Lutheran Compass Center- \$1.1 million
- Karlstrom- \$894,000

HUMAN SERVICES

The City of Seattle's human service funding strategy addresses needs throughout the center city, including South Downtown neighborhoods. Recent examples include the *1811 Eastlake* housing project for homeless late-stage alcoholics, *Plymouth on Stewart* housing for homeless persons with a history of high use of the emergency medical system, and the *Langdon and Anne Simons Senior Apartments* provides housing and services to older, chronically homeless seniors.

The *Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness* is a regional effort to significantly increase the supply of housing and support services to help end homelessness in King County by 2014. The City is one of three major funders of this initiative with King County and United Way of King County.

CO-STAR is a program to move frequent users of the Municipal Court and Jail into permanent housing with associated services. *Connections*, located at the Downtown Emergency Service Center's Morrison Hotel, provides support, referrals to services, housing, and employment for homeless men and women. In addition to these programs, the City has supported renovations at community facilities such as the Chief Seattle Club (2nd Avenue Extension) and the Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall (South King Street near 12th Avenue). The City will also support the addition of four new dental chairs at the International Community Health Services Dental Clinic at the International District Village Square.

The City funds human service agencies located in South Downtown including food banks, meal programs, domestic violence services, information and assistance, citizenship

assistance, child care, family support, caregiver support, case management, day services for senior citizens. Agencies receiving City funds include the Asian Counseling and Referral Service, Family Services of King County, International District Housing Alliance, Seattle Indian Center, and St. Vincent de Paul. In South Downtown, the City funds medical services such as Harborview's Pioneer Square Clinic, International Community Health Services' International District Clinic, and Leschi Center Medical Clinic, run by the Seattle Indian Health Board.

LIBRARY

The City funded a new library branch as part of the Village Square II project in the Chinatown/International District which opened in 2005. The 3,930-square-foot space seats 40 people, has 12 computers for the public and has the capacity to hold up to 12,000 books and materials. The branch specializes in materials in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and English. Bilingual staff members are fluent in Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Lao.

